



DIRTY JIM
A Complete Novellette
by S. B. H. Hurst

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THE lawlessness north of certain latitudes is a favorite theme for song and story and men talk of the “good old days” when vice ruled and decency was weakness; but the wildest bad man whose voice ever woke unpleasant echoes among the frozen solitudes would have seemed a mere student in villainy among the more intelligent blackguards of the South Seas.

Even today there are things done on the islands that would make many Alaskan toughs shudder; and back in the early ‘80’s, when the strong captains of the swift trading schooners were monarchs, when blackbirding was considered a legitimate speculation, and there were places not on the charts—long ago, it seems, when Polynesia was a paradise bossed by excellent imitations of the devil—such incidents as have made mining-camps famous for their wickedness would have been passed by as unworthy of record.

Out of this flood of iniquity some

faint tales have come to the world and a few faces stare grotesquely through the fog of the years as if seeking recognition, hurt at being forgotten. Men like Tom Spritz and “Bully” Haynes, with their satellites “Sydney Dick” and George Mullens—these, smothered among the dead bones of their many atrocities, sometimes manage, as it were, to push forth a wilted hand, which is feebly waved.

NATURE had been more than usually lavish with the island. Even the coral animals who labored through the centuries to build its foundation saw to it that their efforts should result in a perfect mirror of a harbor with a sufficient opening in the most useful place for sailing vessels. After that they gave the word to their descendants that they should surround Talee with numerous other islands, which should be perfect nests for shell and other things valuable to the pirates who would go there

to trade. And the entire beauty of it all was beyond any painting.

But Tom Spritz was not interested in beauty unless it was kissable. The son of a Sydney convict, all the worst of his father was accentuated in him with an added cunning that made him doubly dangerous. He sat aft under the awning of his schooner, smiling slightly as he went over the details of a plan which had resulted from a most unusual situation.

Nearby two more schooners lay at their anchors, the *Mary*, Captain Bill Nugent, and the *Full Hand*, Captain Ezra Miller; the former an Englishman and the latter claiming American citizenship—a claim Washington would have probably disallowed. These, with Spritz's *Lady Ellen*, divided all the trade of the locality, the three men having made a defensive and offensive alliance which did not hesitate to make war upon any other vessel that ventured to enter the harbor.

And such was the terror of these men's names that not a man among all the ruffians of the islands cared to risk the chance of trading at Talee—most of, them, however, having their own particular places similarly protected by similar alliances.

Suddenly Spritz lifted a pair of binoculars and trained them upon the beach. Outside the shack of "Dirty Jim" a man and woman were apparently talking. With a satisfied grunt Spritz laid aside the glasses and lit his pipe. Then he went back to his planning, trying by bringing in Dirty Jim as an added factor to make his scheme the more workable.

This Dirty Jim was a nobody from nowhere who spoke with the cultured drawl of Oxford but whose appearance—take your most extreme conception of a degenerate beach-comber, incurable drunkard, poverty-stricken sufferer from hook-worm, down-at-the-heel Robinson

Crusoe, useless piece of human flotsam, and anything else sufficiently unpleasant. Add all these together, multiply the result by ten, and you will faintly approximate the appearance of the individual with the unpleasant sobriquet.

But one positive virtue he had—he never bothered with the native women. Otherwise, he never worked, food being obtainable for the mere trouble of getting it; and he was always drunk on cheap trade gin which the few white men gave him in unlimited quantities so as to be rid of him. But Captain Spritz had seen him talking to a woman, and the sight had given the captain pleasure. For the woman was the cause of the captain's planning, and her presence on Talee was, to say the least, remarkable.

Young, about twenty-four, she had money enough of her own to live comfortably in England. But being an orphan without a living relative, she lacked an outlet for her affections—the right man not having put in an appearance—and consequently she became possessed of the notion that she had a mission in life. For a time the mission hovered in her mind in a nebulous state, with a strong religious coloring. And then she joined the Salvation Army, which at that time was a new organization and subject to unpleasant persecution.

Looking back it seems strange that in well-policed England no or very little protection was afforded this religious body from the bricks and dead cats of the toughs of the towns where it held its meetings. Perhaps it was this element of martyrdom that attracted the girl, Katie Wood. And then, as if the roughs of England were too peaceful for her, she determined to spread the Army's teachings overseas. So she got out her atlas and happened upon that speck on the map marked Talee—reaching there

by hazardous journeyings via Australia.

But Talee, ruled by Spritz, Nugent and Miller, had long before warned off the missionaries—who with incomprehensible cowardice and thoughtlessness had given the girl a passage to the island in their schooner with only text-bordered warnings concerning what she could expect. And once there she found no one to listen to her kindly teachings but Dirty Jim, who was usually too drunk to understand what she said.

Then came Tom Spritz, six-feet-two and weighing two hundred and fifty pounds in hard condition. He saw the girl and she looked good to him. But even Spritz, in the year 1885, did not care to steal the girl in broad daylight. Not that it was likely that any one would attempt to stop him, but there was a vague, indefinable something, inspired by neither fear nor caution, which made it appear advisable to kidnap her during the night. Wherefore he smiled and found his plan was good.

But he had neglected to remember that to his allies also morality was a myth and decency a legend and that their eyes must have fallen upon the girl with intent far from religious. One can not expect proper restraint from his chosen associates if one is so tough as to boast habitually of using broken bottles for face powder; and consequently Tom Spritz, when his two friends rowed over to pay him a visit, found himself doubting if after all an alliance were as profitable as a lone hand.

IT WAS Nugent who genially brought up the subject—and it was said of him that he could laugh pleasantly while throwing his best friend to the sharks—wagging his great, blond head with the zest of it.

“We’ve bet on it,” he bellowed as the boat came alongside. “If you haven’t, I lose—but you won’t say you haven’t.”

“Bet on what?” Spritz leaned over the rail with interest.

“Well, not exactly bet—because we both want to bet the same way. Wait till we get aboard—tell you then, you old pirate!”

Nugent heaved himself over the low rail, chuckling violently.

The captain’s servant brought drinks and set chairs around the table under the after awning. While he was doing this the two visitors talked generalities only. Not that there was any danger of the boy’s repeating what they said, even if he had understood, but the same feeling that had caused Captain Spritz to plan a certain enterprise for the night-time demanded an unnecessary secrecy of the visitors—they were living their lives outside the grip of civilization, but the shadow of its customs and laws lay unpleasantly upon their souls.

“Now—” Nugent’s face rippled with smiles—“bet you ’most anything, Tom, that you’re scheming to get that missionary girl away from here—before me and this other rascal Miller can lay our hands on her. How about it?”

Tom Spritz could have cheerfully shot his engaging friend, but his face showed nothing but surprise. He dissembled ingeniously. Why should he bother about the girl? Better to let her alone, he thought. One could always do what one wanted to with missionaries, but they had a beastly habit of squealing. Then the people back in England started to raise — and first thing you knew a man-of-war fired a shot across your bows and then there was the devil to pay. He was not sure, of course, but he believed it meant imprisonment for life.

“What does?” the lank-haired Miller leered.

“Why—” Spritz tried to appear unconcerned—“why—kidnaping a girl. A white girl, anyway.”

“Well,” Miller laughed, “nobody said anything about doing that. All Bill said was about taking her away from here—like as if the island wasn’t healthy.”

Nugent roared.

“You showed your hand, Tom. Come on, now, own up. You was figuring all the time, just as we were, to grab that girl for yourself. Of course we know it’s against the law. Only—” he lowered his voice—“it’s a hanging offense under the British law.”

“But who’s to know about it?” Spritz admitted his interest without further quibble.

“That’s it,” Miller leaned forward and spoke with confidence. “We can say she came aboard of her own free will if she makes a fuss. But it ain’t likely she’ll make a fuss after she’s put in a week or so aboard. The point is, who’s to have her? We all can’t.”

“That’s what we came over to talk about,” amended Nugent.

The three men stared at one another. Clean-shaven and nattily dressed as they were, they were nevertheless lineal descendants of the sea-robbers of past times, and some of the things they did would have turned their ancestors green with envy.

They couldn’t all have the girl, that was obvious. So who was to be the lucky man? And even if some decision were arrived at if it were decided which of them should sail with the girl in his cabin, could that one trust the other two to keep their words and keep their hands off? Fighting would be foolish. The winner would be too badly hurt to enjoy his honeymoon. How were they to decide?

“There are the three of us,” Bill Nugent spoke slowly. “One of us sails tonight with that girl aboard his schooner. The other two agrees to keep their hands

off and their heads shut, eh?”

“Certainly,” chorused the other two in unison.

“Well, then—” there was a dubious note to Nugent’s voice—“how will we settle it—cards or dice?”

“Once aboard the lugger, the girl is mine.”

The sarcastic manner in which Spritz made the ancient quotation was like a searchlight thrown on his mind. His companions laughed as a matter of course but a moment later their eyes met significantly. Tom Spritz was furious. He had been planning to get the girl when they came on board. And when Tom was mad he didn’t let a little thing like an agreement stand in his way. He would bear watching. But the thing to do was to act as if they trusted him.

“Cards—stud-poker.” Miller played the game well.

“How do you mean?” Nugent, who really meant to act fairly once the infamous pact was made, was interested.

“I’ll tell you,” went on Miller. “We each take ten chips. Each chip has the same value. We play stud—freeze-out. The man sticking longest wins the right to swipe the girl. If he doesn’t manage to get her in twenty-four hours he loses his chance and anybody can get her who wants to.”

“Freeze-out seems a —— of a long game.” Nugent spoke as if the stake was the next drink.

“Oh, it’s fast enough playing stud. Everybody has to ante each deal—if a man don’t win a pot in ten deals, even if he don’t make a bet, he’s broke.”

“You’re quite a mathematician,” snarled Spritz, who appeared to be on the verge of refusing to play.

“I’m quite a poker-player,” retorted Miller, stroking his long black mustache complacently.

“Oh, all right. Boy!” Spritz called, and his servant came running. “Bring cards and chips. I can play a bit myself.”

“And I don’t call myself exactly a fool,” Nugent smiled as usual.

If it is possible to imagine a satyr being fat, Nugent was a fat satyr.

There was a touch of the unreal about everything. The harbor was so calm that the shadows of late afternoon lay unrippled upon it, and the fact that the three schooners were as devoid of movement as the island itself gave the scene the appearance of a picture. One could easily have looked at it and believed that there would never be any change, never any movement—that it would look as it did for years, until the picture wore off the canvas.

And the actions of the three men under the awning of the *Lady Ellen* were stagy. The stake was so unusual that the game might have been arranged by the keeper of three lunatics to keep them amused. While each man was determined to do his best to win, not one of them believed the winner would gain anything tangible—so little trust did they have in one another.

In fact, if there were anything at all at stake it was the off-chance that the losers would keep their words.

Even Nugent, who had intended to play fairly, decided that he would be a fool to do so. But Nugent’s character was far too complex for a superficial analysis. And yet the men were as serious and intent as any three men might be who delighted in stud-poker; Miller giving each man ten chips, taking ten himself, then ostentatiously closing the box. After which he directed the boy to take the box, with the remaining chips, back to the cabin.

FIRST jack deals.”

He began to deal ’round the cards,

the first jack falling to Spritz.

“Your deal, Tom.” He pushed the scattered cards across the table. “Got a hunch you’re going to have bad luck.”

Spritz raised his head—it looked as if it had been carved out of a block of teak-wood by a patient but inartistic savage—and the peculiar smolder in his eyes seemed to increase like a fire blown into flame by the wind.

“Do you? Well, I know you feel quite upset about it, don’t you?”

Miller could meet those eyes only with an effort; the brutish force of them cowed his fox-like nature. He laughed queerly.

“Well, deal ‘em.”

“When I’m ——— good and ready,” Spritz snarled.

“Now, now, boys.” The laughing Nugent, who would have been delighted if his companions had shot one another, mimicked distress at their quarrel. “Remember we’re sort of partners in business—what they call allies.”

“Yes,” retorted Spritz with blunt honesty, “yes, we’re allies because one of us alone ain’t heavy enough to stop others from trading here.”

“Cut the cards, Bill. Everybody ante,” Miller interjected.

Spritz, about to deal the first card, paused, squeezing the pack between his huge paws.

“Seems to me you’re trying to run things?”

“Well, is everybody to ante, or not?”

“Everybody ante, of course—but you don’t have to tell us.”

Miller was a long way from being a coward, but a profitless quarrel did not appeal to his intelligence. He therefore made no answer, in spite of Nugent’s questioning glances—Nugent being quite

ready to take sides against the bullying Sprite—contenting himself with lighting a cigar.

Then Spritz dealt the cards, three exposed and three buried. He looked at his hole-card, and turned his exposed card face down—passing out, having only a deuce and a seven. He picked up the pack, waiting to deal when the others had made their bets. Miller's exposed card was a six-spot, Nugent's was a jack.

"You're high," Miller remarked.

"I see I am."

Nugent had looked at his hole-card, and was now studying his opponent.

"Bet a 'couple,'" he added suddenly.

"See it."

Miller pushed two chips toward the center of the table and nodded to Spritz, who dealt again.

This time he dealt Nugent another jack, and Miller a seven. It looked like a good place for Captain Miller to get out, but when Nugent, apparently trying to coax him along, bet one chip, Miller at once pushed one chip to the center, grinning at Spritz's look of surprise as the latter began to deal again.

The deal gave Nugent a queen and Miller another six. Nugent was still high with a pair of jacks and a queen in sight against his opponent's pair of sixes and a seven; and it looked, unless Miller quit, as if he would be trusting to his luck to "draw out."

A bit annoyed at having as he thought coaxed his opponent to stay and better his hand, Nugent now decided rather thoughtlessly to make him pay to stay. He accordingly bet four of his remaining six chips. To his surprise and secret alarm, Miller at once saw the bet, and Spritz dealt the last two cards—Nugent a four and Miller a ten. Nugent was still high in sight, and it was therefore his bet.

"Well," Miller sneered slightly, "what are you going to do?"

Nugent was watching him closely.

"Allowed a bit of time, ain't I?" he asked nastily, sparring for that useful commodity.

"All you want," Miller puffed deeply at his cigar, and grinned as he looked at the exposed cards.

Nugent was thinking. All he had of value was the pair of jacks—his hole-card being a deuce. Of course, he had Miller beaten in sight, for Miller only showed a pair of sixes. But what had he in the hole? There was the point and the little detail which raises stud-poker to the height of one of the greatest games in the world—its brother draw being of as low a scientific order as roulette.

Nugent could see every card in his opponent's hand but one, just as Miller could see all of Nugent's cards but one. But Miller appeared to be confident of the issue, while Nugent was not. Yet Nugent knew he had the best hand unless Miller's hole-card was a six, a seven or a ten. If a six, he had three sixes; if a seven or a ten, he held two pair—in either case enough to beat Nugent.

But then the chances in Nugent's favor were the better—for he certainly had the highest pair. But Miller's confident manner, and his ready calling, made it appear that his hole-card improved his hand. On the contrary, unless Nugent was a player of a rare sort, his hesitancy at this last bet was proof that he had nothing but the pair of jacks.

"I check," Nugent spoke suddenly, meaning he passed the bet to his opponent—about the best thing he could do after waiting so long, and taking into account the limited number of chips.

Miller at once pushed his remaining chips to the middle of the table. He didn't

say a word.

Nugent shifted about in his chair uneasily. Spritz leaned forward, interested. The game had gripped the players—not one of them was thinking about the stake. Nugent sought Miller's eyes as if to read through them the secret of his hole-card. Then, still keeping his eyes on Miller's, he lifted his remaining chips as if to bet them.

"Sure you don't want to draw down, Miller?" he asked, his voice quavering slightly with excitement.

"Quite sure." Miller was laconic.

And Nugent shook his head, with a forced smile, retaining his chips on his side of the table.

"I won't bet 'em," he snarled. "You've got either two pair or threes. Take the pot."

Miller, with a slightly insulting gesture, raked in the pot; and as he pushed his cards away he turned over the buried one. It was an ace.

"——!" Nugent was furious. "I had you beat."

"Why didn't you call, then?"

Miller began to stack his chips, while the other, on the verge of starting a row, slammed the cards together and began to shuffle clumsily. Spritz laughed shortly.

"You ought to have called," he advised.

"The ——! I suppose you would?"

"Of course—anybody could see he was bluffing," returned Spritz.

"Well, we'll see. But you can never tell how a hand looks unless you're playing it."

He anteed one of his two chips, and pushed the pack to Miller to be cut. It looked as if Captain Nugent would have to play not only very good stud-poker but also play in very good luck if he were to have the privilege of kidnaping the Salvation Army girl. And he was more angry than he

wanted to appear.

It was not the first time Miller had outwitted him. There were matters of trade, and other things, studding the years of their acquaintance, which irked when they came to the surface of consciousness. His face flushed until the blood could be seen creeping under his blond hair. Miller, on the contrary, was cool and comfortable. It was a favorite pose of his to seem unmoved by success. He pulled deliberately at his mustache.

"Cut," repeated Nugent.

"Might be a good idea." Miller's tone was silky, but it made Nugent the more savage, as it was meant to do.

Nugent dealt the cards, giving himself an ace and a king—above the average hand. But he was cautious. He had only one chip left after the ante, and he hoped for at least a pair when he was forced to ask for a show-down. So he passed, remarking that he would—

"Just deal this hand, and watch."

And now Tom Spritz determined to show that he knew the game. The fact of his having a pair of aces back to back—the best hand he could possibly hold at that stage of the deal—helped him to that determination. It was true that he only had eight chips in his stack against Miller's seventeen, but, to use an old saying, he had chips enough for a good player.

Miller had a queen in sight and it was up to Tom to bet. He bet two chips and Miller called. Nugent gave each man another card—Miller another queen, Spritz a ten.

"Big hands out, eh, Tom?" Miller spoke genially.

"You bet," Spritz grinned back, and bet another chip, which Miller called.

THEN Nugent dealt Spritz another ten and Miller a four. Spritz laughed loudly. He

had aces up while Miller only had a pair of queens in sight, with a four. It looked like a cinch. He pushed all his chips to the center, but Miller saw them without hesitating.

“the ——!” cried Spritz. “It’s a showdown, you know—but you’ve got lots of chips.”

He turned over his hole-card, showing that he had two pair. But Miller, without a sound, showed a queen in the hole—three queens, the better hand.

“For God’s sake!” Spritz cried to Nugent “Give me another ace, Bill.”

“I’ll do my best,” Nugent laughed as usual, but he only dealt a six to Spritz and then as if to add insult to injury gave Miller another four, making a full hand.

“Like killing a louse with a hundred-ton gun,” remarked Miller as he raked in the pot.

Spritz, his fists clenched, was ready to spring at Miller’s throat, but a certain idea restrained him.

“Guess I’m out of it,” he remarked as quietly as he could. “Well, you chaps will stay to supper.”

They remonstrated, each anxious to win and get away. But Spritz insisted.

“Besides,” he added, “it may take some time for this game to finish.”

“Don’t look like it when I look at my stack,” answered Nugent with affected sorrow. “But where are you going, Tom?”

“Got to speak to the mate,” replied Spritz, getting out of his chair.

“Going to his room to weep,” grinned Miller.

“Don’t you wish you had a chance of being a bridegroom, like us, Tom?”

Spritz laughed quite naturally.

“I told you I hadn’t thought of it before you fellows came aboard,” he lied as he left the poop.

“The —— he didn’t.” Miller was shuffling the cards. “Now, I wonder what

he’s going to speak to Sydney Dick about?”

“What does it matter?” returned Nugent cheerfully. “Dick’s probably drunk.”

But Sydney Dick was not drunk, and to him the word of Spritz was above any law. The orders he received that afternoon were unusual, but he accepted them as if he were not a bit surprised—which he wasn’t. Then Spritz went back to his guests.

The game had changed somewhat. When Spritz left Nugent had only a chip left, hence a show-down for the ante was in order. But Nugent’s luck had come to his rescue—for freeze-out is not poker in the legitimate sense of the word—and when Spritz returned from his conference with his mate Nugent had five chips in front of him and was shuffling the cards to deal. Miller, of course, had twenty-five chips.

Nugent dealt, and it was his bet—he having a king in sight, and Miller a nine. Nugent bet one chip, but Miller, perhaps intending to force matters, raised him four. For a moment Nugent hesitated—lifting his hole-card and looking at it in the curious way stud-players do when they know quite well what the card is—then he pushed his four remaining chips to the middle of the table.

“Might as well turn ’em face up—it’s another show-down,” suggested Miller.

Nugent did not answer. He turned over his hole-card, showing the queen of spades, Miller did the same, showing another nine. The odds were all in favor of Miller: two nines against a king and a queen of different suits. Then Nugent dealt Miller another nine, cursing as he did so, and dealt himself the ten of clubs. The game appeared to be over and Miller pretended to rake in the chips.

“Hold on!” rasped Nugent. You

haven't won yet."

"Pretty near, though," interrupted Spritz, dropping heavily into his chair.

Nugent glared, but did not reply. Then his face cleared and very deliberately he dealt again, giving his opponent the ace of hearts and himself the ace of diamonds.

"Might be worse," he grunted.

"Don't see that you've got anything. Just a straight, open in the middle," retorted Miller.: "But deal the — things—what are you waiting for?"

"This." Nugent dealt with one of those curious prophetic feelings of certainty called a sure hunch, giving Miller the two of spades and himself the jack of the same suit.

"Funny, ain't it?" he laughed as he scooped the chips over to his side; and as he spoke he felt sure that he was going to beat Miller at stud—to do which was worth more than getting the girl, at that moment.

But Miller had still the greater number of chips, which perhaps caused him to over-bet his hand. At any rate when Nugent, chuckling with confidence and delight, again shuffled the cards, his stack showed twenty-two chips to Miller's eight.

But Miller was apparently unmoved. He considered himself the better player and attributed Nugent's winnings to an extraordinary run of luck. If he played carefully, Nugent could never win.

But Nugent had no intention of letting him play carefully. Feeling sure that the luck was on his side, he bet the size of Miller's stack on the first card; and Miller, with a pair of tens back to back, was in a quandary. Nugent's card was an ace—what had he in the hole? Two tens was above the average hand, and the play, ordinarily, was to call Nugent's bet. But to do so meant all Miller's chips. And Nugent might have a pair of aces.

"Oh, bet 'em—what's the matter

with you?" asked Spritz impatiently.

"Who's playing this hand?" asked Miller nastily.

"That's so," agreed Nugent unexpectedly. "I have an ace in the hole, you know."

"I think so," admitted Miller, turning down his card.

"Ha, ha!" Nugent laughed loudly, disregarding the fact that he had only one chip belonging to his opponent in the pot he took in. "Got you that time—measly little deuce in the hole—you had me beat. Ha, ha! Where's your nerve?"

Miller did not answer, but Spritz reminded Nugent about the time he had laid down a pair of jacks, and an argument began which Miller terminated by saying sharply as he offered the pack—

"Cut!"

Nugent cut the cards and Miller began to deal. The luck appeared to be changing, for Nugent's exposed card was a two of spades while Miller's was an ace of the same suit. Both men looked at their hole-cards and then Miller pushed all his chips into the pot. Nugent called, and Miller, since it was a show-down, turned over his hole-card, showing another ace. Nugent, with what looked like foolish obstinacy, refused to show his hole-card.

"Go on, what have you got, Bill?" cried Spritz eagerly.

"I don't have to show unless I want till the hand's dealt," snapped Nugent.

"Not even got another deuce," sneered Spritz.

But Nugent continued obstinate and Miller dealt him another deuce and gave himself another ace, at which Spritz laughed again.

"Three aces. Not so bad, eh, Miller? Bill has a couple of two spots and a three in the hole—see if he hasn't. But when is this crazy game going to end?"

As there was no further betting to be done, Miller continued dealing, giving himself the unusually large hand of an ace full on sevens. He looked at Nugent, whose exposed cards were three deuces and the king of clubs—also a large hand, but one that looked small against the ace full.

“Shall I take the pot, or have you something in the hole to beat me?” drawled Miller, who knew that there was only one card that could beat him.

“Nugent has four deuces. Don’t steal the pot, Miller,” broke in Spritz sarcastically.

Nugent smiled.

“You want to be careful, Tom, or people won’t know you.”

“How?”

Spritz was somewhat puzzled.

“Won’t know you—because of your telling the truth,” chuckled Nugent, turning over his hole-card and showing the fourth deuce; the others gasping as he ostentatiously raked in all the chips.

“You fellows want to put our agreement in writing?” he asked with curious quietness.

“What for?”

Miller was about to argue the point—bristling over his defeat—when Spritz broke in:

“Writing—what for? You’re welcome to the —— girl, for all of me. As I told you, I’m not interested in her—just played to pass the time. Kidnaping a white woman looks a bit too dangerous, the more I think about it. Wish you joy all the same, Bill, and no hard feelings. Course I won’t say nothing, and if you get into a mess come to me and I’ll do all I can to help you. You will, too, won’t you, Miller?” he asked with the heartiness of a disinterested friend.

“I’m with you,” Miller agreed. “Let’s drink the bridegroom’s health.”

So, illustrating the inevitability of natural law, these three exponents of the doctrine of force little dreamed that years later a nation called Germany, bred to the same doctrine, would end in the same direction—the satisfaction of lust.

II

DIRTY JIM sat outside his shack, sober but shaky, balancing the ledger of his thirty years of life; thinking chiefly how very long it was since he was respected as Jim Anesty, since he rowed stroke in the Oxford boat in that memorable race when the dark blue crept up from behind and won by a quarter of a length. Why had he fallen so low, he wondered—wondered in vain, for this was during the days—unhappily lingering yet in certain places—when drunkenness was called vice instead of disease.

One hundred years before Christian England, in Bedlam, had treated the insane as if they were responsible for their condition—with inconceivable brutality—and the same barbarity considered Jim a drunken brute when he was a sick man. So no one had offered to help him when ancestral tendencies broke out in him just as tuberculosis might have manifested itself.

No one but little Miss Wood, that wonderfully sympathetic and curiously charming young lady with such novel views on religious subjects—views, however, which only penetrated into poor Jim’s mind as sunlight penetrates into muddy water. But the poor chap had come to worship her as saints are worshiped, and out of that worship was growing a desire to be better—not the mere wish common to all sufferers from alcohol or drugs, but a desire which demanded satisfaction in effort and self-help.

The spice-scented darkness of the island was soothing, and the faint murmur of the sea against the beach was like a lullaby. As Captain Spritz had observed, Miss Wood, the Salvation Army girl, had talked nearly all afternoon to the beachcomber. She had talked as a kindly sister, and Jim had listened. And now he looked up at the stars apparently staring at him from a moonless sky, and smiled.

He had found one resolve he could surely keep—even if he must have drink, he could at least be a gentleman about it: he could keep himself clean-shaved, and his clothing decent. He went into his shack, lit the battered lamp, shaved, and with difficulty trimmed his hair. Then he got out his one pongee suit and silk shirt and dressed himself, finding in it a delight to which he had long been a stranger. The feel of his smooth cheek under his hand was inspiring, the touch of clean clothes against his bathed body was luxurious. Never again would he look otherwise than he did then. Like a child pleased with a new toy he lay down to sleep on his cot—fully dressed.

AND as Jim Annesty closed his eyes, Captain Spritz, sitting at the head of his table, winked pleasantly at Sydney Dick and looked mockingly at his two guests—whose heavy snores almost shook the little cabin.

“Pretty easy, eh?”

“Yes, and they never expected it. They just swallowed dope and drink like as if they wanted a good sleep.” Sydney Dick laughed at his wit.

“All right,” Spritz went on. “Just tie ’em up good, in case they wake, and put them in the spare room. You sent their boat back?”

“Yes, sir—told the *serang* that when I signaled he was to come for the *Tuans*.”

“I wonder what they’ll say tomorrow?” mused Spritz. “But never mind. I’m going ashore now. I want two good men in the boat. Soon as I come alongside hoist the signal. Then dump these sleepers into their boat, lift the mud-hook and bring her to the wind. Better heave short after I go ashore—there’s no drag worth speaking of.”

“All right, sir.” Sydney Dick was as interested as his captain, for the reason that any form of villainy charmed him.

Then Tom Spritz had a couple of his men row him ashore. He might have been going to gather flowers so little was he spiritually disturbed. Which causes one to think sometimes that there are automatons in the world without souls, yet clothed in the guise of men, set there by Omnipotence to frighten us by their wickedness into better ways of life.

JIM ANNESTY was dreaming. He was in a lovely old-fashioned garden, lavish with such blossoms as sweet-williams, mignonette, English wall-flowers, and violets. The high walls were overgrown with ivy and the shade was soothing. And near the walls were several fruit-trees, from which he might take whatever fruit he desired. But he was surprized to find that he did not want any fruit, although he knew very well it was good for him; and he became restless, wandering about disconsolate, because there was something he wanted that the garden did not contain; and presently he found the gate, over which was an arch, and he opened the gate and saw that the arch was studded with gin bottles in such a way that the bottles spelled the word “Katie.”

Then he heard a woman weeping and he went into the garden and found the Salvation Army girl weeping bitterly because he loved the bottles over the gate

more than he loved her. Then, in the silly way of dreams, he began to explain that it really did not matter—as long as he loved Katie what did it matter whether she was an array of bottles or a woman.

But to please her he said he would destroy the bottles and love her instead—it was only an unimportant detail, after all. So he raised his gun—in some way the gun got into his hand—and began to shoot the bottles off the arch; and at his first shot the girl screamed and....

Annesty woke up, sitting up on his cot, trembling and staring into the darkness. Then, moved by something beyond him, he pulled on his shoes and went outside his shack.

The night had grown very dark, clouds covering the stars. The world was still except down on the shingle about fifty yards from where Annesty stood shivering from his sudden waking. There a big man whom the beach-comber recognized in a moment was lifting into a boat something that struggled vainly. It was like an unreal picture made by shadows which changes as one watches into half-imagined shapes. Then the boat pushed off and began to row toward the *Lady Ellen*.

So the cry in the dream had been real. Annesty realized this, as he stood there, with the semi-paralyzed nerves of the alcoholic and with his mind, long unaccustomed to making a decision, wavering between half a dozen possibilities of action. He could not see who the woman was. But there was only one girl on the island whom Spritz would be compelled to take aboard his schooner in this fashion and at this hour. Apart from the suggestive influence of the dream, cold logic pointed to the Salvation Army girl as the prisoner in the rapidly moving boat.

And who on the island would risk the wrath of Tom Spritz by attempting a

rescue? Even if there were time to find some man—for Annesty knew Spritz would put to sea at once—it would be useless. For what was the use of tackling Spritz on board his own ship without half a dozen well-armed and determined men? And the beachcomber doubted that there was any one on Talee who cared whether Spritz kidnaped the girl or not.

The moving boat left a stirring track of phosphorescence, which Annesty watched with a sort of stupid sorrow; and then like a hypodermic injection that takes effect the picture of the struggling girl being hustled into the boat stirred the right depth of the reservoir of Annesty's subconscious mind, and he reacted with a quiver of anger.

Deep in that tank of his ancestors' experiences was a memory—perhaps of a gorilla-like creature who had suddenly found his mate struggling in the arms of his rival. And that ancestor possessed Jim Annesty—recharging his nervous system with the vitality of an anger that sees red.

Half a dozen years before he had been a great athlete, but he had never known such a strength as he knew that night. He acted with a purpose and certainty that he caught himself wondering at—as if he were a spectator, as if he had relinquished the body of Jim Annesty to some one else, who was performing marvels in it. And the first glimpse he had of himself was when he was swimming swiftly but cautiously toward the schooner because he had no boat.

The boat reached the schooner as Annesty swam and her shadow against the faint sky light showed her ready for sea—her sails hoisted and shaking in what little wind came into the harbor; and Annesty knew that the mere flap of her sails would take the schooner through the water faster than he could swim. So he doubled his

efforts, careless now about being seen. Then another boat rowed swiftly past him and so close that he had to dive to hide himself; and this boat, to his great surprise, was also making for the *Lady Ellen*.

From the schooner came a confused hum of voices. Annesty swam into the dark made by her quarter and saw something being dumped unceremoniously into the second boat while other men were hoisting the first to its tiny davits. As he treaded water, he puzzled about this second boat but could find no answer—knowing nothing, of course, about the unhappy condition of Captains Miller and Nugent. Then he heard a voice—the deep voice of Spritz—whispering hoarsely:

“All right, *Serang*, take ’em aboard. Up with the mud-hook, Dick.”

Then the second boat swung off into the darkness.

Very cautiously Jim Annesty swam to where the rail was lowest, keeping as close to the ship as he could to avoid being noticed. He was thinking furiously. Spritz would have locked the girl in his cabin, intending to leave her there till he worked the schooner into deep water. Until then she was safe.

Sydney Dick and most of the crew were now on the forecastle—getting the anchor up. Spritz would be aft on the poop. The awning had been furled. To find some sort of weapon, then to find the girl and wait with her until Spritz came—this was Annesty’s plan. But the greatest difficulty lay in getting on board without being seen.

Hugging the schooner’s side, Annesty listened to the clank of the cable as it came over the windlass. This lasted a few minutes only—the anchor having been hove short before Spritz came aboard. Then Sydney Dick called aft and Spritz answered. There was the sound of men running along the deck to the halliards, the

schooner heeled slightly, and Annesty realized she was under way. He must get aboard now or never.

He rested one hand on the molding, made a spring and caught the edge of the rail; then he brought up his other hand and raised himself until his eyes were above the rail and he could see along the decks. He had been on board the schooner several times and knew his way about. For a few moments he watched carefully. Then he swung himself over the rail and ran swiftly aft to the cabin.

He stood in the alleyway, breathing hard, the awful reaction of collapse clutching at his weakened physique. The sudden impulse of courage that had sent him swimming to the schooner had left him and only the trembling of unusual over-exertion remained. All about the ship men were running to the shouted orders of Spritz and his mate. And then Annesty remembered that he had forgotten to pick up a weapon.

The schooner was gliding through the water. In a few moments Spritz would leave the deck. For one horrible moment Jim Annesty wished he had not come and thought of slipping over the rail again. Then the man he used to be came to his help and he stepped out to the pin-rail and selected a wooden belaying-pin—a very useful weapon.

He slipped back into the alleyway and began to walk aft to the captain’s cabin. On either side as he went along the curtain-doors of other cabins caused him to hesitate. Sydney Dick he knew to be on deck, but the steward and perhaps a clerk might be behind one of these curtains. But nobody came out or got in his way, and trembling like a leaf, he reached the main cabin.

The table with its fixed chairs was in the center and the swinging lamp

showed that everything had been cleaned away since dinner. Opening off the main cabin were four doors. One was the bathroom, in one Spritz kept his chronometers and charts, in one of the others he slept, and the other was a spare room. In one of the latter two the girl was probably confined.

It was less than a minute since Annesty had left the water, although he had the feeling that much had happened to him. Now, clutching his belaying-pin, he went to the door of Spritz's sleeping-room and knocked lightly.

THERE was no answer, but it seemed that a low undercurrent, of sound suddenly ceased. What had that sound been? He had noticed it half-consciously when he first entered the main cabin.

Again he tapped lightly on the cabin door and then—half a gasp, half a sigh, and wholly terrified—a voice feebly answered, "Yes" and Annesty understood that the low sound had been the girl's sobbing;

"It's me—Annesty—I want to help you," he whispered.

"Yes," came back eagerly.

"Are you locked in there?"

"Yes, and that big man must have the key."

Annesty fought with his diseased nerves. He wanted calm—calm, so he could think. The situation was exceedingly dangerous. Every hand on the schooner would be against him and Spritz would throw him overboard and think nothing about doing it. And the girl's position was worse—for after all Annesty had only his life to lose. He had hoped to get into the cabin where the girl was confined—to hide behind the door and strike Spritz down with the belaying-pin when he came.

But what could he do now? He

looked about desperately. To break down the door would be foolish, even if possible. The broken lock would only serve to warn Spritz. And the minutes were passing. Spritz would be down very soon. Annesty walked rapidly to the room where Spritz kept his charts. Inside in a rack over the wash-stand was a bottle of whisky. With trembling hands, Annesty reached for it and took the drink he needed.

The swim and the unusual strain had taken a lot out of him. But he wisely limited himself to the amount he required as a stimulant. He felt better—able to plan. He thought of boldly taking the whisky out to the main cabin table, sitting down and pretending to be drunk. In that event, Spritz would never imagine he was there to help the girl. It would be difficult for Spritz to imagine that anyway.

And he knew Spritz's peculiar disposition well enough to know that he would treat his presence in the cabin as a joke. Yes, if he acted drunk, he would be safe. But Spritz would throw him out of the main cabin, give him more whisky, and—the girl would be lost. Then he heard heavy footsteps coming down the companion way.

Annesty slipped out of the chart-room and crouched by the side of the companion-way steps. Unless he could stun Spritz with one blow it would be all over. For it was doubtful if even John L. Sullivan, then in his prime, would have any chance in a rough-and-tumble with the big captain, much less Jim Annesty, who felt like a man about to be hanged, the courage that had once made him a great athlete having been drowned in years of alcohol.

It was Spritz coming down the stairs, and he was alone. Annesty was not hidden and if the captain looked his way he would see him. But Spritz's eyes and mind were fixed on something else and he never

even glanced in Annesty's direction. As he reached the deck of the main cabin, the beachcomber raised himself on his tiptoes and rifted the belaying-pin.

Then, with all his strength, he brought it down on the captain's head and the big man fell unconscious without as much as a grunt.

That blow would have killed an ordinary man, but Annesty had no delusions about Spritz's vitality. Very quickly he went through his pockets and found the key of the girl's cabin, then he went back into the chart-room and picked up a hank of spun yarn he had seen lying there. Coming back, he securely bound Spritz's hands behind his back and tied his ankles together. Then he opened the door of the cabin where the girl was confined.

The bunk ran fore and aft against the vessel's side. Into this Spritz had thrown the girl, but she had got out and was crouched on the leather settee, which was fixed athwartships at the after end of the cabin. Her hair fell in a shower to her waist, her clothes were torn, she was white with terror and she was still crying.

But she did not recognize Annesty. Indeed, the clean shave and change of clothes and the general air of resolution altered him completely from the disreputable beach-comber she had tried to reform. So she gasped when he entered the room, and her astonishment stopped her crying.

"I'm Annesty," he anticipated her question.

She was too much upset to do more than nod, and she probably saw no help in Annesty's presence. She would have faced death bravely enough, but that other... And Spritz had carefully removed every sort of weapon from the room.

"Help me to drag Spritz in here."

She only looked at him helplessly,

so Annesty took her arm almost roughly and led her to where the unconscious Spritz sprawled.

"Take his other arm. And, look here—you've got to buck up. Be brave. I think I can get you out of this all right, but if I can not I'll see you get a chance to kill yourself. Here, wait a minute."

He went into the chart-room again and brought out a small glass of whisky.

"Here, drink this."

She refused, shook her head, seemed disgusted. But he insisted, told her to take it like medicine, and at last she swallowed it with a wry face.

"Now, you'll be better. Take his arm again and we'll lock him up where you were."

The whisky did its work. A flush came to the girl's cheek. With some difficulty they dragged Spritz into the cabin, left him on the floor and locked the door.

"You look better." Annesty put the key in his pocket.

"I feel better. I'm afraid I've been an awful coward."

"Not at all—you had a rotten shock."

"Can I help you?"

"Certainly. But I don't quite know what I'm going to do yet. Will you step into the chart-room—no, somebody might go there. Go into that spare room there and lock the door on the inside. I'll find you a pistol soon. Wonder why we took the trouble to put Spritz in his own room?"

The girl did not know, but she went into the spare room and locked the door. Then Annesty considered the worst of his job. His destination? He shivered, then tried to put it out of his mind as being too far off to bother with. Sydney Dick at present in charge of the deck and the only other white man on board? In some way he

would have to be confined with Spritz. After that Annesty would have to force the native crew to do his bidding.

It looked like an impossible task for any man—for Spritz had his men bound to him by all sorts of fears. Well, then, the first thing to do was to get control of all the firearms on the schooner. Annesty went back into the chart-room, for he had found no gun on the unconscious Spritz, who seldom needed one.

OVER the bunk in the chart-room were two fine rifles and in the desk a pair of new revolvers with several packages of cartridges. Annesty took down the rifles and hid them under the mattress; then he turned to look for the key of the room and found a double-holstered belt for the revolvers behind the door. Attached to the belt were two canvas bags for shells. This was luck. The revolvers were not loaded, so Annesty loaded them and fastened the belt 'round his waist.

Against the forward bulkhead of the main cabin were two stands of various rifles and shotguns. These Annesty also locked in the chart-room after knocking out pins and otherwise doing his best to render the guns useless. He then went forward to Sydney Dick's room in the alleyway. The lamp was lit, but expecting the owner to interrupt him every moment he searched it thoroughly; finding nothing but a small derringer which he thought of throwing overboard. Then he remembered his promise to the girl. The pistol was loaded, but there were no spare shells. He went back to the spare room and knocked.

"Yes?"

"Open the door—I have something for you."

She came out quickly, looking much better, and took the pistol gratefully.

"Keep quiet till I need you. At

daylight I'll run my bluff on the crew. If I can get the *kanaka* second mate on my side we'll win out. Don't use that thing until the last, and keep it hidden."

She promised, and then annoyed at his carelessness he went into Spritz's cabin and with a handkerchief securely gagged the captain, who was breathing rather heavily but seemed none the worse for the blow on the head. For a little while Annesty watched him. He felt he had been very lucky. Then he realized that Spritz had given orders that nobody was to enter the main cabin. The steward would have to be reckoned with. He was a Chinaman and would have a knife but no gun. It was unlikely that Spritz would allow any member of the crew to own a gun—except Sydney Dick. Therefore Annesty had probably accounted for all the firearms on the schooner. But he felt very tired and sleepy and his nerves were on edge and getting worse. He went out and locked the door, and then eight bells were struck. The time, then, had come to tackle Sydney Dick. He would be going to his room, relieved by the second mate. Annesty went back to the chart-room and took a small drink. He put down the glass, went out quickly and picked up the belaying-pin. It had occurred to him that the mate might come to the chart-room to write up the log—a fear born of Annesty's ignorance, since the mate of a ship keeps his own log in his own cabin. So he waited again by the steps of the companion way. The passage was proceeding just as other passages. The kidnaping of the girl had made no more disturbance in the ship's routine than the loading of an extra package. Everything was quiet, the schooner slipping along about six knots an hour. No one ever went into the main cabin at night but Spritz, unless it was necessary to call him on account of bad weather. Overhead on the

poop Annesty heard footsteps—the man relieving the wheel and the second mate relieving Sydney Dick. There were no passengers.

Annesty waited twenty minutes by the cabin clock, then he tiptoed along the alleyway and listened outside the curtain of the mate's room. Regular breathing told him all he wanted to know. He did not relish the idea of hitting a sleeping man, blackguard as that man was, but it had to be done. He pushed aside the curtain and went in, the belaying-pin poised. He stood by the side of the bunk, hesitating. Then he closed his eyes and brought the weapon down—wildly. It missed the mate altogether, hitting the edge of the bunk. Sydney Dick sat up and saw him in the half-light but the intended shout never left his lips.

There came to Annesty, nerving him, the memory of the girl's struggle with Spritz as he carried her into the boat. But he did not hit the mate as hard as he had hit the captain.

Then another problem—and problems were falling all about him like flakes in, a heavy snow-storm with a dark bank ahead presaging a heavier fall—what to do with the unconscious mate? To leave him in his room would be folly, for he couldn't watch him, and some one would be sure to find him; and to put him in with Spritz would be as unwise, for several reasons. Jim again knocked on the girl's door.

"Sorry to trouble you again, but I have another prisoner. May I have your room to lock him in?"

She assented and they dragged the mate to the spare room and tied him with spun yarn. Then they locked him up and Annesty suggested the chart-room, with its array of useless guns, for her resting-place. She made no objection, and the man

noticed how the events of the night had taken away her initiative, how she depended entirely upon him and trusted him; and he found something very pleasing and strengthening in her trust.

Nevertheless he successfully removed the whisky from the chart-room without her seeing him do it and hid it in a convenient place. Then he remembered that he had not gagged the mate and went back to do it. He told himself he would have to stop forgetting things like that.

It was a little after five o'clock. Time enough when light came—about six—to tell the second mate he was in charge and impress the crew with the need of obeying him. But how would they take it? He wanted to take the schooner to Sydney, but that was many hundred miles away. He would have to sleep. Was the girl able to watch against surprise while he slept? A lot would depend on the second mate. If he were trustworthy and would come on his side half the battle would be over.

But it was a lot to expect. It was the hour when a man's courage is at its lowest and Jim Annesty saw no comfort ahead. And while he waited, speculating unhappily, the dawn came.

He heard the steward go forward to the galley. Was Spritz in the habit of having coffee at this hour? But that didn't matter, unless the steward had another key. He examined the revolvers and went up the companionway. The second mate was standing aft by the wheel. Annesty beckoned to him, and walked to the break of the poop.

"A passenger?" The second mate was surprised.

"No." Annesty drew one of the revolvers. "I'm in charge of the ship."

The second mate's mouth opened stupidly and Annesty went on, telling of

the crime Spritz had committed, that death was the penalty and that all who assisted the captain would be made accomplices.

“Now,” he finished, “I have destroyed all the guns but these—unless you have one?”

The second mate shook his head—he had no gun.

“Well, then, do as I tell you and make the crew obey and you’ll be all right. If you don’t, I’ll shoot.”

“You can’t boss all hands—” the second mate’s voice was ugly—“and I won’t go against Spritz. So you can’t get the schooner to Sydney or anywhere. I’m going to keep out of it by going to my room.”

And he went off the poop.

Things looked very black. Annesty did not want to shoot any one. He had to have a crew to work the ship. If they all imitated the second mate—as they likely would—he was helpless and it would be only a question of time before some one released Spritz. When that happened, to shoot the girl and himself would be the only thing to do. And then he saw the girl at the head of the companionway.

“It’s nearly day, isn’t it?” she asked.

“Yes. This twilight will disappear very soon, with the sun coming up. But I ought to tell you that things look bad, very bad.”

She smiled.

“I feel sure that everything is going to come out all right. You see, I have just been praying and I feel that God is going to answer my prayer.”

“I don’t see how, unless He makes the crew go to work.”

SHE did not answer, but her smile was one of complete faith. Then suddenly the dawn vanished with the sunrise, a school of

flying-fish flushed past, harried by bonita, the breeze dropped to a light air, and it was day. With an excited cry the girl clutched Annesty’s arm.

“See! Didn’t I tell you?”

He followed the direction of her pointing finger and saw a ship. Then he made a dive for the companionway and brought up the glasses, focusing them with trembling fingers.

The ship was about a mile and a half away and Annesty didn’t need the glass to tell him she was an English man-of-war.

“Quick—” he laid down the glasses—“help me hoist the ensign, union down. What luck, what wonderful luck! It’s a man-of-war. We’re all right.”

“It’s not luck,” she insisted. “I told you God would answer my prayer.”

The man-of-war ran up the answering pennant, but Annesty did not feel that he had been sufficiently definite—and well for him he didn’t. Therefore, with much difficulty, he searched the “Commercial Code” until he found the flag-hoist for “Mutiny, send armed boat,” and he sent the four flags up in place of the inverted ensign. But the schooner had barely steerageway and in the light air the flags hung indistinguishably; but after Annesty had ordered the man at the wheel to alter his course so that the flags would get all the breeze favorably—and rather to his surprise the man obeyed—they one by one spread long enough for the officer on the man-of-war to read them. Dimly over the water came the boatswain’s pipe and at that moment Annesty heard a noise in the main cabin below.

He opened the skylight quickly and saw the second mate, who had promised to remain neutral, trying to open Sprite’s door with a chisel and hammer. The sight made him furious—the second mate’s action

seemed to be directed against the girl—and he pulled one of the revolvers out of its holster and, without caring, began to shoot at the second mate. That individual responded with a howl in spite of Annesty's bad shooting and dived for safety.

But the ex-beachcomber wanted to kill. The long night vigil had reacted upon his frazzled nerves with almost a blood-lust, and the second mate's treachery had supplied the incentive. He started down the companion way determined to kill, while the crew came out on deck to see what was the matter—for it must be remembered that this was their first intimation of any change, although the second mate had waylaid the steward when he brought the coffee, which was something Annesty had overlooked. But the girl stopped him. "Don't bother with him," she pleaded.

"But you don't understand what he was doing."

"Yes, I do. But we ought to be so grateful to God for sending the man-of-war that we would want to forgive our enemies."

Annesty sighed. The literalness of this Salvation Army girl was a bit too much for him, although he was an orthodox Christian. Her religion was such a personal and intimate affair that he would not have been greatly surprised if her conception of God had suddenly appeared on the poop of the *Lady Ellen*. The realness of her faith was staggering.

"Oh, all right—if you don't want him shot." He placed the revolver in the holster.

"That's a good man—and the boat will be here in a minute."

But when the boat did arrive Annesty found himself confronted with a situation he had never expected. In the first place, the officer in charge had expected a

mutinous crew. When that crew threw him a rope and then put a side-ladder over he began to think some one was playing tricks with him. And there was no sign of trouble.

True, the girl and Annesty quickly told their story, but the wily second mate, looking for future favors from Spritz, swore that the girl and Annesty had come on board together, pretending to be man and wife; that in the night they had brutally stunned the captain and the mate, smashed all the guns, and then threatened to shoot him—the second mate—if he didn't take the ship where they wanted.

He had refused because he was honest and no pirate, but only a few minutes before, as the crew would testify, the man Annesty had amused himself by shooting at him. No, sir, there had been no mutiny as any one could see. 'Twas just a sheer case of piracy.

"But why did I hoist the flags, if that is the case?" suggested Annesty.

This puzzled the officer, who decided to put the matter before his captain—taking the girl, Annesty, Spritz and Sydney Dick on board the man-of-war with him.

So the now conscious and blasphemous captain and mate were untied and helped into the boat. Their scowls and muttered threats were disconcerting to Annesty, whose nerves were nearly gone, but the girl treated them with contempt; and in such wise they gathered before the captain of the man-of-war.

The girl told her tale first—who she was, why she went to the island, and about Spritz's attempt to kidnap her. Then Annesty told of his seeing this, and of what he had done to protect the girl. Spritz and Sydney Dick denied it all and insisted that Annesty was a pirate. The naval captain was obviously undecided—both tales were unusual—when another officer entered the

cabin. This one looked at Jim for some moments, then whispered in his captain's car.

"So you rowed in the Oxford boat?" asked the captain.

Annesty admitted it, and then the other officer revealed himself as an old friend. This was all very bad for Spritz, for the captain of the man-of-war, discovering that Annesty was one of his own kind, understood his mental processes and felt he was telling the truth; when the girl explained that she had no clothes on the schooner, proving she had not gone on board freely—for what woman would go for a voyage without taking any clothes?—the case went against Spritz.

"We're bound for Sydney," said the captain. "I think we'll take you along and get you sent to jail."

At this Sydney Dick weakened, swearing he had only obeyed his captain, who had gone ashore to steal the girl.

"Take them for'ard and put 'em in cells—the schooner we'll take charge of," ordered the captain.

Then the girl began to plead for leniency. It was a matter of religious conviction. Enemies must be forgiven. The captain of the man-of-war attempted to show her the fallacy of such a creed by illustrating what would happen to the navy if it followed it. But the girl would not reason.

Like many others, she believed a thing was right, and when her common sense showed it was wrong she deliberately denied common sense. And after all she was the person most interested. The captain knew it would be an awful bore attending Spritz's trial in Sydney. So he gave in, and gave an order. The order resulted in two splashes and much cursing, and the crew of the man-of-war crowded the rail to watch Spritz and his mate swim ungracefully

back to the schooner.

ANNESTY in some of his old friend's clothes looked very different from the beachcomber the girl had tried to convert, and she no longer talked conversion to him. Instead, she was shy, and her eyes met his with difficulty, and she blushed easily. So that Annesty's old friend told him he was a lucky dog, for the girl was wonderfully pretty, the more so now that love thrilled her.

But Annesty doubted his luck, and he thought long and deeply on the subject. She loved him, but better a little pain now than the pain of a lifetime. He meant to avoid drink, but he knew how often he had made that same resolution and failed. He did not know that he was cured—that he had been cured by one of those uncommon psychological shocks akin to hypnotism or prayerful suggestion, and that when the poison died out of him he would be entirely well. And so, seeing his duty as he saw it, he was not happy on the way to Sydney.

THE sun was setting behind the fast disappearing coast-line of Australia, and Annesty leaned over the rail of the Liverpool-bound ship watching it. That coast-line held all in the world that loved him, all that he loved. Somewhere on that land was the only woman he had ever loved, the one woman who ever loved him. He knew this, although he had not spoken of his love to her. There had been no need for either to do that. And yet, perversely, he had tried to believe that if he went away without a word of farewell she would think he did not love her.

He had changed greatly from the nerveless wreck that had so bravely gone to the girl's rescue on the schooner and three or four months more on the ship without whisky would see a yet better man. He was

working his way to England, to begin life there where he had left it.

There was a tang in the wind that seemed to hint at great deeds—deeds untold, unsung, never shouted about from the housetops; and Annesty, looking far into the future, saw many people, his descendants, all tainted with that alcoholic tendency which would remain in him even if he were cured.

He pictured them, helpless to resist the craving for the poison, in the gutter, in jail, in the lowest places of the world, and all of them suffering: young men suddenly stricken as he had been in their athletic prime; young women falling victims to the

disease in their budding womanhood; and the degenerate age of all of them, palsied, useless, filthy, criminal.

He had shuddered at the picture and clenched his fist with the resolve that, no such unhappy line should descend from him. No, he loved the little girl and she loved him, but he felt that he was showing a greater love by leaving her forever.

Then the dark fell, the side-lights were lit, the lookout went on the fore-castle head and presently eight bells were struck aft and the lookout repeated it.

“All’s well,” was borne aft by the wind, and the ex-beachcomber, looking reverently upward, swore to keep it so.